

Emus, who also performed with the troupe. To Emus, Toto taught all he knew of the technic of the many Indonesian instruments, and it is Emus who now assumes the role of principal musician when ever the remaining members of the troupe perform. Toto's death was a great loss, not only to the troupe, but to the art world generally. In addition to Emus, his son, Toto is survived in this country by his wife, who, incidentally acts as chaperone to the girls, and his niece, Juanita Turpez, (Devi Wani) probably the most beautiful member of the troupe.

#### DEVI WANI

At the sound of the gambelin, the graceful creature who emerges from the wings of the stage compels your attention. As you watch her agile fingers with the tapering nails flutter, a secret message is caught in some yet — primitive part of your being and you begin to breathe faster — you are watching incomparable Wani. Devi Wani, or Juanita Turpez, like her Uncle Toto, is a native of Singapore. She is, by popular acclaim, the most strikingly exotic dancer in the troupe. The contrast of her beautiful blue-black hair and the rich golden hue of her body is an artist's dream. These natural endowments have not gone unnoticed by artists, for Wani has been sought out to sit for photographic portraits, paintings and sculptures. One of the most striking of these is a nude study, the work of sculptress Maude Phelps Hutchins.

Wani's dancing is tops in her field. Her complete confidence is evident in every movement of her beautiful body. Her performances leave her audiences spellbound. Her requests for encores are overwhelming. It is only natural that she should have a long line of admirers, yet, with characteristic simplicity she is completely unaffected by such attention. Her whole soul and body is enveloped in her art and she accepts praise with utmost grace and detachment.

Many of Wani's fans, whom she willingly obliges with autographs, are pleasantly surprised when she replies to their queries in English. In the eight years of her stay here, she has acquired a good speaking knowledge of the language, and her speech is marked intriguingly with an accent that gives a kind of music to even the simplest English phrase.

Wani and the other girls have absorbed an amazing amount of American culture. They, like young women everywhere, follow fashions and trends with the exhu-

berance typical of youth (their ages range from 19 to the middle twenties). With Mimah and Tinah, Wani has added to her private accomplishments some of the American and Latin American folk dances, and answers in her usual direct manner when asked, that she thinks American men are "Char-meeng, nice, yes".

#### DEVI MIMAH

In the group dances, Wani is most frequently accompanied by an intense little dancer with a skin like polished bronze. Matching every movement with uncanny precision, she arrests your gaze. It is not the gold foil of her intricate headress, nor the beautiful pattern of her Sarong that holds you, it is the electric force charging every movement of this golden dancer that causes you to move forward in your seat unconsciously. There you remain until Davi Mimah has released you, for it's she you have seen dance.

Devi Mimah is Mimah Alimah of Java. It is always an inspiration to watch this magnetic little creature perform. Her interpretation is masterful and subtle. She manages even the most strenuous and difficult movements with effortless grace. One of Mimah's favorite dances is the popular Piring a Sumatran plate dance in which the dancers demonstrate their skill in handling a plate in each hand, tapping out a rhythmical accompaniment with rings worn on the fourth fingers. Another of her favorites, at which she excels, is the Pustako, a Javanese love dance.

Offstage, one is immediately impressed by the trusting wonderful simplicity of her manner. Sincere and trusting, Mimah as yet is unable to comprehend the duplicity and intrigue that is so common in our Western civilization. She is never critical however.

Her interest in the Latin American dances has become a passion and already she has mastered some of the difficult castanet dances, giving them, interestingly, just a bit of an Oriental flavor.

#### DEVI TINAH

Appearing sometimes in solo performances, and more often with either Wani or Mimah is Devi Tinah, who is affectionately called "Little One" by her intimates. Tinah is a native of Java. Her doll-like fragility masks a vitality surprising to all who witness her dance. One does not soon forget the perfect control of her bronze body, the eloquent gestures of her hands, the sure movements of her limbs as exhibited in her performance of the spectacular Nautch Dance. Nor is one likely to discover elsewhere a performance to equal her informed version of the Kreshna Tresno. Observing this little dancer, every movement of her slim body becomes a revelation. She truly loves to dance. Such total dedication to her art has paid off in a flawless technic.

Tinah, like the other girls, possesses a graceful easy manner which endears her to all who know her. Her preferences in clothes still favor the simple native Sarongs, which incidentally, are not the same as the garment draping our own Dorothy Lamour. In Java, Tinah explains no native would ever appear outside of her bedroom in the Lamour version of this wraparound, for it happens to be the Javanese "night gown".

Briefly, then, these are some of the personalities which comprise the Bali-Java troupe. True appreciation of their art can hardly be captured in words. To know the exotic beauty and grace of these artists one must see them perform — it is a thing of the senses first, and the intellect second. And, it is an experience which may become increasingly rare, for in a rapidly changing Orient it is too much to hope that the traditions of a primitive culture as exemplified in the art of these dancers will long retain those special qualities which inform it with candor and power.

#### POLISH DANCERS NOOK

We, that is the PFD's are at present a very tired but happy group bent on unpacking our suitcases, relaxing and putting away our Polish costumes in moth balls for at least several months. You may still meet any one of us walking along and humming "Meet Me in St. Louis" but now with an air of joyous reminiscence instead of anticipatory eagerness. However, we must warn you not to start anyone of us talking about our trip to St. Louis and our part in the National Folk Festival for invariably you will hear of "Volume I, Chapter I and two evenings later you will still be listening.

Yes, we finally got "West of the Mississippi" in a group of 6 couples consisting of Helen Arendt, Mary and Emily Czernek, Florence Jania, Regina Kuzius, Emily Mucha, Joe Jania, Lewis Mahoney, Peter Pilotti, Eddie Szarek, Steve Smagacz and Alan Kuper.

Eight of us reached St. Louis after 9 hrs. spent on the Greyhound bus. It was by no means a peaceful or restful trip due to some "night-hawks" who made sure none of us would miss our stop by over-sleeping so they sang, joked and talked. Of course, there was one advantage to it — we were sure the driver couldn't fall asleep either, so we were safe. The other four came in Al Kuper's car, and how the "twain" met is a story in itself. Three PFD's and one foreigner namely Bob Irrgang (whom we found in St. Louis helping Vyts and whom we decided to adopt into the Polish group) were waiting for a bus around 12:30 A. M. somewhere in the middle of St. Louis temporarily bewildered as to our location (we wouldn't admit being lost) and not at all sure that the buses in this great Metropolis ran after midnight (they don't, we found out later) when what should we see crawling along but a car with a Chicago license carrying our four missing dancers. We piled in to the car expecting to be whisked to our hotel but that would be too simple. Instead we found that our immigrants expected us to navigate them to the Kingsway Hotel (our home in St. Louis) and that their car was on its last stand — the brakes gone and the emergency tire being used so we had to ride at about 5 miles an hour. When we arrived at the hotel we found Vyts ready to call out the Police Dept. National Guard and the Foreign Legion to help look for his dancers and if Vyts isn't grey yet it's not our fault — we tried our best.

Most of us spent Thursday & Friday sight-seeing and getting reacquainted with the many friends we made while attending last year's festival in Cleveland. All Saturday we spent dancing beginning with rehearsal in the morning, an afternoon performance for which we danced Wale Kaszubski, Mazurka, Zasiali Goarle and Wesele U Witosa while in the evening we used our Krakowiak, Polka Wengierka and Bialy Mazur. We did very well judging by the applause as well as the praises and congratulations heaped upon us. That same night we were invited by the Polish Falcons Nest # 45 of St. Louis to a party so after the show 3 cars picked us up at the Kiel Auditorium stage door and we were taken to the other side of the town for a dance and refreshments.

Sunday we packed then went to the St. Louis Cathedral for Mass and spent the rest of our morning saying good-bye to our friends old and new. After dinner we checked out with a final farewell to the Texans who were our neighbors for the 4 days — we leaving Missouri with a Texas accent and they with peacock feathers in their 10-gallon hats.

Sunday afternoon found us performing together with Vyts Liths in East St. Louis for the parishioners of the Immaculate Conception Church. After the show we were invited to supper at the parish hall and later to a dance.

Here we stayed until our bus time when we were driven to St. Louis to the bus station.

Within 2 days after our return from St. Louis the PFD's participated in the NUS annual Spring Festival which this year was a performance of "Poprawiny" a play depicting the Polish festivities on the second day after a wedding. Following the newly inaugurated system of rotating the leads in the play to give every PFD a chance to be "Bride and Groom" in one of our festivals, the choice fell on Regina Kuzius and Eddie Szarek and a very handsome couple they made drawing a lot of compliments for their performance as did the rest of the cast. The show was repeated again on June 3rd for a group of professional and business women who attended a dinner at the Settlement and once again the performance was greeted with enthusiasm and showered with praises.

DOWIDZENIA!!!

Mary and Emily Czernek



#### AS FOR MYSELF

Unexpectedly, Mrs. Rose, from Waukesha, Wis. wrote that she planned to drive down to St. Louis, Mo., to attend the Folk Festival and asked if I cared to join her party. Naturally, I did, and so, on May 21st, Bob Irrgang and I joined her party which consisted of her daughter, Lorna, and Mrs. Earl Tremaine, from Oconomowoc, Wis. We had a pleasurable trip and arrived in time for the evening's performance.

I saw many friends met at previous festivals and met new ones. The four days of the festival were one continuous whirl of excitement and tension. My program was so crammed that nothing "extra-mural" could have been added. In fact, I was unable to deliver my talk at a scheduled early morning discourse session and had to send Bob Irrgang to deliver a prepared talk for me which he did very well. At the previous day's session, at which Miss Vittum was also one of the speakers, I was pleasantly surprised to find Jimmy Nober as one of the discourses. He was the head man of the former noted Park House in Chicago. At present he resides in Solon, (near Cleveland) Ohio and is in charge of the Conference of Christians and Jews organization. It was also good to see Miss Knott again, who is a grand friend, Major Pickering, Mrs. Proctor, the Lith group of Boston, and of course, my old Fairhope, Alabama, crowd. When I was still in Alabama, most of the present year's performers were in their early teens and weren't too keen about holding hands with girls even while doing folk dances; but the picture changed now and they are big boys. Three years away made quite a difference. They sure are a nice clean cut bunch of youngsters.

Saturday, the 24th, Fathers Anthony Deksnys, Sr. and Jr. (uncle & nephew), who are priests at the Immaculate Conception Lithuanian church of East St. Louis, came over and treated the entire Lithuanian bunch with a supper in a restaurant and that night, after the program, they took us over to East St. Louis where we stayed over night. I and three others stayed at the rectory. The following morning, being Pentecost, the whole group attended Mass which was officiated by Father Deksnys (Jr). That day we dined at the rectory and put on a two hour program at the Bohemian Hall for the BALF (Lithuanian Relief) benefit. My Polish group also took part in the program after which another supper was prepared for both groups at the Parish Hall.

The Lithuanians of East St. Louis were unfamiliar with Lithuanian folk dances. Many of them have lived in that part of the country for forty years or over, and they rejoiced with every bit that was presented to them. The



The Late TOTO MAS BLASS TRINIDAD